WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Self Employment

*381. SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether any concrete efforts are being made by the Government to provide facilities to the rural youths for self employment through setting up of food processing industries;

(b) if so, whether the Government are promoting the processing industries based on agricultural produce like foodgrains, pulse, fruits, flowers, vegetables, oil-seeds, etc;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government propose to restrict the entry of multinational companies and big industrial houses in the processing industries based on agricultural produce; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI DILIP KUMAR RAY) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c). Government have taken various steps to promote food processing industries in both urban non-urban areas, which *inter-alia* include, delicensing of most food processing industries and operating many developmental plan schemes. One such scheme envisages provision of assistance for the setting up of Food Processing and Training Centres in rural areas. These Centres process raw materials like foodgrains, fruits, vegetables, etc. The training imparted in such Centres enables the trainees to start small food processing units.

(d) and (e). Like all other industries foreign investment in food processing sector is governed by the Industrial Policy announced by Ministry of Industry under the process of liberalisation in 1991.

[English]

State Power Projects

*382. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether eminent persons and environmentalists have urged the Government to reconsider its decision to allow the State Governments to clear all power projects;

(b) if so, whether there is persistent demand to set up an independent statutory authority responsible for speedy appraisal and environmental clearance to power projects; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Government have received representations expressing apprehension about further delegation of authority to the States for clearance of power projects.

(b) and (c). The Central Electricity Authority and other concerned agencies, including those relating to environment, are at present responsible for clearance to power projects. There are also proposals before Government for constitution of Independent Regulatory Commissions for regulation of the power industry. This matter was discussed in the Chief Ministers' Conference held recently and the suggestions received during the Conference in this regard are currently under consideration of the Government.

Cogentrix Power Projects

*386. SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH :
DR. M. JAGANNATH :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Supreme Court has directed the Union Government/Government of Karnataka to secure clearance from the National Environment Engineering Institute for Cogentrix Power Project;

(b) if so, whether any action has been taken in the matter so far; and

(c) if not, the time by which the action is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) The Supreme Court directed the National Environment Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to examine five projects, including Cogentrix power project, from the environmental point of view.

(b) and (c). NEERI submitted its report to the Supreme Court on 6.12.1996. The case came up for hearing on 17.12.1996. It is understood that the Court has remitted the case to the High Court of Karnataka for further hearing. Formal order of the Court is awaited.

Naptha as a Fuel

*387. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Naptha as a fuel for power generation is likely to cost more as recommended by the Committee of Secretaries;